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River goddess. Many of the Syntengs regard the River Kopili to this day with superstitious reverence. Some of these people will not cross the river at all; others can do so after having performed a sacrifice with goats and fowls. Any traveller who wishes to cross the river must leave behind him the rice which he has taken for the journey, and any other food supplies he may have brought with him. This superstition often results in serious inconvenience to travellers between the Jaintia Hills and North Cachar, unless they have arranged for another batch of coolies to meet them on the Cachar side of the River Kopili, for the Synteng coolies throw down their loads at the river side, and nothing will induce them to cross the river. The Kopili is propitiated by puja in many parts of the Jaintia Hills, and at Nartiang a tank where sacrifices are regularly performed is called Ka Umkoi Kopili.

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(3) *Mookynna*, or *mawnam*, which are stones erected to commemorate a parent or some other near relation.

(4) *Maw-sohei*, which are put up to mark the position of tanks or *umkoi*, the water of which is supposed to cleanse the ashes and bones of those who have died unnatural deaths.

(5) *Maw-shaphlait*, or flat table-stones, often accompanied by vertical stones, which are placed in the market-places and by the side of roads to serve as seats for weary travellers. Taking the above main divisions seriatim, *maw-lyoti*, or *mawlyot*, may be described as follows. These generally consist of three upright stones, the tallest being in the centre, and a flat table-stone being placed in front. There are, however, some clans which erect more than three upright stones, as *thrah-lyoti*, or *mawlyot*. As already stated, the clansfolk used to erect these stones, *mawlyoti* (the stone of the way), or *mawlyot* (the stone of the leg) at such place at which they halted for the night on their way to deposit the bones of their deceased maternal relations in the clan *urnshaw*, or *mawbah*. The stones are called *mawlyot*, or stones of the leg, because it is supposed that the spirits of the departed sit and rest their limbs on the flat table-stones. The upright stones are not as a rule more than 3 or 4 ft. high, and are not massive like the great monoliths, or memorial stones. They are to be found in great numbers all along the roads or paths which lead to the clan *mawbah*. These stones, unlike the *mawlynna*, have no names.

(6) *Mookynna*, or *mawnam*, are erected to commemorate deceased parents or deceased ancestors, and consist of 3, 5, 7, 9, or even, in an exceptional case, 11, upright stones with flat table-stones in front. The upright stones are called *maw-shynrang*, or male stones, and the flat table-stones *maw-kyrkhei*, or female stones. Turning to the plate of the Laitkor stones, it will be observed that there are nine upright stones, and one large flat table-stone in front. Counting from right to left, stone No. 5 is called *u maw kni*, or the maternal uncle's stone, and the stones to the right and left of it, *ki maw ryngai ki pawa*, i.e. the stones of the maternal brothers and nephews. The table-stone is called *ka Iewbah kynrad*, or *ka Iewbah kynmaw*, literally the grandmother of the row, or the old grandmother, in contradistinction to *ka*

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and that the latter were originally used by both of them for sacrificing human victims. Sometimes, immediately on either side of the *mawbah*, or large central stone, there are two much smaller stones called *mawbaing*, or the stone of the drum, and *mawbait*, the stone of the plantain; the drum being used in all religious ceremonies by the Khasis, and the plantain relating to their custom of feeding young children on plantains. The *mawbah* must be described separately from the *mawbynna*, because they differ from them in an important particular, i.e. that the former may be erected to commemorate the father, while the latter are set up to perpetuate the memory of the ancestors on the female side of the family. *Mawbah* consist of three upright stones and one flat table-stone in front. The large central stone is called a *maw lhawkeng*, or the stone of the father, and the upright stones on either side are meant to represent the father's brothers or nephews. The flat table-stone is *ka kradoh*, i.e. the grandmother of the father, not the first grandmother of the clan, as is the case of the *mawbynna*.

(c) The *maw sohei* have already been described. They are erected to mark the sites of purificatory tanks, which have been dug so that the remains of deceased persons may be cleansed from the impurities attending an unnatural death, and to counteract the adverse influence upon the clan of *Ka Tyrsi*, or the goddess of death. These stones are sometimes called *mawtyrsi*.

(d) *Maw-shaphlait*, or stones upon which every traveller sits, are to be found alongside all the principal lines of communication in the district. It may serve as an example of these stones to describe the very interesting collection of stones at Nartiang *hât*, or market. A reference is invited to the plate which gives a representation of some of the Nartiang stones. The great height of the upright stone will at once be seen; it is 27 ft. in height and 2½ ft. thick. This stone is the largest erect stone in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills at the present day, and is a very fine specimen. The upright stones and the flat table-stones at Nartiang are called "*ki maw jong Siem*." There is no separate designation for each of them. These stones are popularly supposed to have been erected long ago by two men,

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U Leh Lasker and U Mar Phalyngki, to commemorate the establishment of Nartiang market, which is called Iew Mawlong. "Lasker" is the Synteng equivalent of the Khasi *lyngdoh*, or prime minister. "Mar" is a Synteng word meaning a giant, the idea amongst the people being that in the olden days there were giants in the land who performed marvellous feats of strength, e.g. the erection of the megalithic remains at Nartiang and elsewhere. A puja is performed upon a great flat stone by the *daloi* and his officers in honour of the founders of the market, but no animals are sacrificed, rice and *opoi* (balls of rice) only being offered. In the days of the Jaintia kings only the Raja could sit upon the great flat stone; hence the name *mau jong Siem* (or Siem's stone). The great upright stone is said to have been brought by U Leh Lasker and a great number of people from Suriang, a place near Nartiang. With reference to the Nartiang stones I would refer to my theory, formulated above, that they were originally connected with human sacrifices. It may be mentioned that at Nartiang there is a bridge constructed out of a single stone, which is also said to have been set in position by U Leh Lasker. Near Sohtinga there is a group of stones, said to have been originally thirty in number, together with *mau shongthait*, or stones to sit the weary, which were erected to the memory of a woman, Ka Kempatwat, who in generations past is alleged to have had no less than *thirty* husbands. The lady is not supposed to have been polyandrous, nor simultaneously married, but to have divorced one husband after another. So she probably established a record for divorce, her descendants afterwards commemorated her in the manner described. There is another very large stone at Nongkseh, which unfortunately fell to the ground in the great earthquake-shock of 1897. This stone must have stood over 20 ft. above the ground. It is called a *mawbri Siem*, the stone of the Siem's maternal uncle, and it used to form the central stone, or *mawbri*, of a line of stones. These stones belong to the clan of the Iaiong of Nongkseh, which furnishes the *wahadei*, or head sacrificer, of the Siem of Khyrim. The stones at Rowmai, which in ancient days used to be the head-quarters of a Siem, are some of the best carved in the hills. At Mawmyngaw, in the Jaintia sub-division, is a stone upon

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ROADS AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

supply. As the District depends so largely for its supply of rice upon Sylhet and Kamrup, the rates of the markets in those places exercise a greater influence on the rates in the Hills than any failure of the local harvest. In the year 1898 the price of common rice is said to have risen as high as 6 seers for the rupee, or 18¾ lbs. per rupee, in consequence of the failure of the crops in the plains.

Roads and Means of Communication.—The following are the eight principal lines of road in the Khási and Jaintia Hills:—(1) Road from Shillong to Cherrá, in Khásia. This road has recently (1897) been opened for wheeled traffic throughout its entire length. The Deputy-Commissioner's Report for 1896-97 states that the number of passengers passing up and down may be estimated at about five or more every month, and the number of carts already used at about 50. The cooly dák brings numbers up to Shillong from Cherrá in two days by a comfortable and easy carriage service, while for native conveyance by bullock cart is available. At Cherrá there is a good dák bungalow in charge of a chowkidár, where the usual accommodation provided in a hotel is to be found. The stages to Shillong are as follow:—(a) Cherrá to Sumráh, 13 miles. The road is good throughout. There is a dák bungalow in charge of a chowkidár at Sumráh, where grass and rice are procurable. (b) Sumráh to Nongpoh, 14½ miles. The road is hilly throughout, but good. At Nongpoh, which is at an elevation of 1500 feet, there is a dák bungalow in charge of a chowkidár, from whom tea, liquors, and biscuits, etc. can be obtained. The dák bungalow is furnished with bedding, linen, etc. Goats and rice can be purchased in the bázár. (c) Nongpoh to Umsning, 18½ miles. At Umsning, elevation 1500 feet, there is a dák bungalow in charge of a chowkidár. Supplies or coolies are not procurable, but sometimes goats and rice can be purchased. (d) Umsning to Umjate, 9½ miles. At Umjate there is a Public Works Department storehouse in charge of a chowkidár. Supplies or coolies are not procurable. (e) Umjate to Shillong, 9½ miles, of which 6½ are a continuous ascent. At Shillong there are dák bungalows in the Artillery Lines, containing four separate rooms, a chowkidár is in attendance, and the rooms are completely furnished with bedding, linen, etc. This entire road, which has a total length of 53 miles, is as perfect a hill road as could be seen in any country, and a credit of engineering skill. (c) Road running from Cherrá across the Hills, via Nongkrem, Mawsmai, Cherrá